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‘At Mr Marston’s Request’: Edward Pudsey and the Inns of Court

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Thanks to the work of Juliet Gowan and Fred Schurink, we know very well now the intellectual and textual habits that shaped the notes from early modern plays and other texts taken by Edward Pudsey in the single manuscript that is now preserved in two unequal sections as Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Eng. poet. d. 3, and as Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Stratford upon Avon, ER 82/1/21.¹ But, as David Kathman records in his *ODNB* life of Pudsey, we know very little at all about his education or the social and institutional networks within which he made those notes.² Edward Pudsey’s elder cousin, Richard Pudsey, whose Oxford education has been well documented – he received a BA in 1580 from St John’s College, Oxford, and an MA in 1583 – might, however, provide one way at least of starting to localise and to personalise the textual network that informed the miscellaneous contents of Edward Pudsey’s manuscript notebook.

The Middle Temple admissions records for 25 October 1595 contain the following entry:

Mr. Richard, son and heir of John Pudsey, late of Cuxham, Oxfordshire, gent., deceased, specially; fine, 3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*, at Mr. Marston’s request. Bound with Messrs. William Combes and Thomas Beaufoue. Mr. Thomas, son and heir-apparent of Thomas Beaufoue of Gwy Clyff, Warwickshire, esq., specially; fine, 5*l.* Bound with Messrs. William Combes and Richard Pudsey.³

William Combes was by the mid-1590s a Middle Templar of long standing and some prominence: recorded here as the second son of John Combes of Stratford-upon-Avon, he had

I am grateful to Fred Schurink and to Charles Cathcart for the advice in the preparation of this note.

¹ Juliet Gowan, ‘“One Man in His Time”: The Notebook of Edward Pudsey’, *Bodleian Library Record*, 22 (2009), 94–101, drawing on her unpublished University of London M.Phil. dissertation (1967); Fred Schurink, ‘Manuscript Commonplace Books, Literature, and Reading in Early Modern England’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 73 (2010), 453–69; and see also J. Rees, ‘Shakespeare and ‘Edward Pudsey’s Booke’, 1600’, *Notes and Queries*, 39 (1992), 330–31.

² David Kathman, ‘Pudsey, Edward (*bap.* 1573, *d.* 1612/13)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/71298, accessed 22 February 2016].

³ Charles Trice Martin, ed., *Minutes of Parliament of the Middle Temple*, 4 vols (London, 1904–5), 1.356.

been admitted on 19 October 1571, and very probably was (under a variant spelling) part of the Combe family from whom, in 1602, William Shakespeare bought land in Old Stratford.⁴ In the June of 1594, the year before he was bound with Richard Pudsey and Thomas Beaufoe, Combes had with three others been ‘appointed to stand at the Cupboard’, the table that serves as the ceremonial centre of Middle Temple Hall, for the ‘default’ of which appointment he was in fact fined 40s. some five months later.⁵ The slightly unusual arrangement by which the two newly admitted members, Pudsey and Beaufoe, stood to be bound with one another, is probably to be explained by Combes’ evident seniority.

The long intermission between the award of Richard Pudsey’s Oxford MA and his admission to the Middle Temple in 1595 may be an oddity, but it is clear that the relationships he formed at the Inns of Court were long-lasting. It is clear, too, that those relationships included his cousin, Edward. Edward Pudsey’s will has been transcribed from National Archives (NA) PROB 10/307 in E.A.J. Honigmann and Susan Brock’s edition of *Playhouse Wills*, but a re-examination of a separate copy of the will in the records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, now NA PROB 11/122/486, serves to show how important were Edward Pudsey’s links both to Richard Pudsey and to Thomas Beaufoe. Pudsey’s will records that he remembered no debts, ‘except what I stand engaged in for others’, of which there was only one:

Fiftie poundes for *which* I haue for this many yeares stood bound to Mr Spencer of Lincolns Inn together with Mr Beawfoe and my Cosen Richard Pudsey (the Mr of Art) who drew mee thereto, The money was Payd to Taylers and other Trades men in London beeing due to them from Sr Thomas Beawfoe A letter from his then wyfe to mee importuning so much with my said Cosen tells me she is well able to prove For my owne part I had not a penny thereof, This was in my younger yeares so that I neither had nor then sought for my securitie.⁶

The triangulation of individuals, institutions and documents here is very striking: the association between Richard Pudsey and Thomas Beaufoe in the admissions record of 1595 is confirmed

⁴ Martin, *Minutes*, 1.181; and for convenience see Peter Holland, ‘Shakespeare, William (1564–1616)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25200, accessed 22 February 2016]; facsimiles of the legal documents are now available in the Folger Shakespeare Library’s *Shakespeare Documented* resource [www.shakespearedocumented.org, accessed 22 February 2016]

⁵ Martin, *Minutes*, 1. 343, 345.

⁶ National Archives PROB 11/122/486; I have expanded contractions in *italics* and silently lowered all superscripts. The transcription in Honigmann and Brock, *Playhouse Wills, 1558-1642* (Manchester, 1993) renders Beawfoe’s name differently twice, as ‘Beawsoe’ and ‘Branfor’, I think in error; the name is clearly ‘Beawfoe’ on both occasions in PROB 11/122/486, though the second title, ‘Sr’, is unexplained.

by Edward Pudsey's later memory of a debt for which he still stood bound together with the two members of the Middle Temple, Pudsey and 'Beawfoe', nearly two decades later. The documents show clearly, too, how the community of the early modern the Inns of Court was bound in economically, socially and textually, as well as legally, here across members of the Middle Temple, Lincoln's Inn, their families and the tradesmen with whom they transacted.⁷

Establishing here the connection between the Richard Pudsey admitted to the Middle Temple in 1595 and the Edward Pudsey whose manuscript notebook has been so well studied directs our attention, of course, to the 'Mr. Marston' at whose 'request' Richard Pudsey was admitted. It is important to say straight away that 'Mr. Marston' was probably the father of dramatist John Marston, rather than the dramatist himself.⁸ The record of the younger Marston's own admission to the Middle Temple on 2 August 1592 carefully distinguishes 'Mr. John, son and heir-apparent of John Marston of Coventry' from 'Mr. Marston, his father, Reader' – that is, a member of some standing and authority in the Inn's community.⁹ The later admission record for Richard Kelley on 24 June 1596, moreover, records Kelley having been bound with 'John Marston, jun.', and so clearly marks the care with which the community differentiated its two identically-named members.¹⁰

Nonetheless, this association – even if at this cousinly remove, and even if only with the Marston family rather than with the dramatist directly – throws a striking light on the presence of extracts from four of John Marston's plays in Edward Pudsey's notebook: *Antonio and Mellida* (MrJ 1), *Antonio's Revenge* (MrJ 2), *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (MrJ 9) and *What You Will* (MrJ 10).¹¹ Juliet Gowan has suggested that extracts from these plays, known along with others to have been performed on the London stage in the years 1598 to 1602, might indicate his having lived in London through these years – a period that we might now think of more clearly, as did Pudsey in his will, as his 'younger yeares', and years in which he associated with members of the Inns community.¹² Certainly this association with the Marston family may confirm the importance of Pudsey's quotations from *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, which provide the first recorded ascription of the play to Marston, where the title-page of its first printed edition named only the company

⁷ For the wider contexts of this argument, see Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring and Sarah Knight, eds, *The Intellectual and Cultural World of the Early Modern Inns of Court* (Manchester, 2011).

⁸ On the two Marstons at the Middle Temple see James Knowles, 'Marston, John (*bap.* 1576, *d.* 1634)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18164, accessed 22 February 2016].

⁹ Martin, ed., *Minutes*, 1.329-30.

¹⁰ Martin, ed., *Minutes*, 1.367.

¹¹ I follow the descriptions in Peter Beal, *Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts, 1450-1700* [celm2.digsum.kcl.ac.uk, accessed 22 February 2016].

¹² Gowan, '“One Man in His Time”', p.97.

that had performed it, the Children of Paul's.¹³ More than that, though, the presence in Pudsey's notebook at fols 87-88 of quotations under the heading 'Temple Sports / M. T. Chris.' now makes a different and more connected kind of sense than previously it has. The 1598 Christmas revels, to a text written by Benjamin Rudyerd, were not printed until 1660 as *The Prince d'Amour*, so the presence of extracts from them in Pudsey's notebook suggests that his privileged access to the textual and celebratory community of the Inn came through his cousin, Richard. Schurink, in closing his detailed account of Edward Pudsey's notebook, quotes Marston's satire on Muscus, who has 'made a common-place booke out of plaies': by seeing more clearly now the connections between Edward Pudsey and Richard Pudsey, and through him not only to the Middle Temple but to the Marston family, we can perhaps look again at Pudsey's notebook, not only as (in Marston's phrase) a 'huge long scraped stock | Of well penn'd playes', but as a vital document in which to see a whole network of relationships – familial and financial, textual and theatrical – crystallised and confirmed.¹⁴

[c.1600 words]

¹³ Bodleian, MS Eng. poet. d.3, fol. 40v; see Martin Wiggins, in association with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama, 1533-1642: A Catalogue. Volume 4, 1598-1602* (Oxford, 2014), p.219.

¹⁴ John Marston, *The Scourge of Villanie*, 11.43, 50-51, as quoted in Schurink, 'Manuscript Commonplace Books', pp.468-69, from Arnold Davenport, ed., *The Poems of John Marston* (Liverpool, 1961).